

A decorative graphic on the right side of the cover, consisting of a series of light orange squares arranged in a descending staircase pattern from the top left towards the bottom right. The background is split horizontally: the top half is a solid orange color, and the bottom half is a solid grey color.

THE DOCUMENTATION AND
COLLECTION PROFILES
OF POLITICAL
FOUNDATION
ARCHIVES
IN GERMANY



THE MANDATE OF THE ARCHIVES

The political foundations are involved in the process of policy development and political decision-making. They are legally and de-facto independent of their respective affiliated political parties and are predominantly state-financed. Their educational offers and scientific facilities are open to the general public. The mandate and responsibilities of the political foundation archives are defined in the German Federal Constitutional Court Decision of July 14, 1986, the so-called "Foundation Decision" ("Stiftungsurteil"). These principles are, furthermore, laid down in the Joint Statement of the Political Foundations of 1998 and in the statutes and rules of procedure of the various political foundations.

Each political foundation has an archive, which aims to preserve the historical tradition of its respective political party. These archives are responsible for collecting, appraising, and making available digital and analog records of their associated party and its politicians. Beyond this, they are involved in scientific research. They take the necessary organizational, technical and staffing measures to secure the permanent safekeeping, preservation and usability of the archival materials and to ensure its protection against unauthorized use, damage or destruction. The intent is to comprehensively document the founding and development processes of

the party and the activities of its officials and politicians.

Beyond documentation and research on the historical developments within their respective associated political party, the archives also provide insight into related socio-political movements and their roots.

They are also the historical memory of their foundation and document and research its historical development. Through their collection activities, they make the political processes in our democracy visible within the meaning of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany that the parties participate in the formation of the will of the people.

The archives of the political foundations are a relevant part of the diverse German archival landscape. They are committed to combined collective archival appraisal, to exchange and cooperation with other archives in order to guarantee the preservation of sources in their original historical context and to optimize the collections development. The joint documentation and collection profile make their collection strategy based on professional criteria and the systematic and continuous preservation of analog and digital archive material transparent.

ANALOG AND DIGITAL RECORDS

The tasks of the political archives include:

- Identification and acquisition of both relevant historical sources and supplementary and substitute records,
- The regulated transfer of these records,
- The appraisal of the sources to determine their archival value,
- Archival description according to international standards,
- Making historically and politically important sources accessible (for use) within the framework of legal regulations
- The creation of an overview of the central sources on the history of the party and the movement for the interested public and especially for users of the archive,
- Own research and stimulation of research, also in a comparative perspective.

The archives see themselves as service institutions that create the basis for research by collecting and processing historical material and that provide information for a wide range of enquiries online and in the reading room. Beyond academic research, they contribute to the historical-political education with events, exhibitions, publications and diverse online offerings.

The archives preserve the records of their associated political party from its inception to the present, including material on predecessor organizations, relevant socio-political movements and related German and international organizations and federations. The main focus of collection is on the records of the party leadership, from the prominent federal echelon to the level of State (Bundesland), regional and local politics, as well as, on material from the parliamentary groups.

In the Media Age, the acquisition, processing and accessibility of digital records proves to be a particular challenge to archives. This includes unstructured file storage, email accounts, data from document management of file processing systems and other systems specialized in particular administrative processes (databases) as well as websites and accounts in social networks. The retro-digitization of analog documents and objects ensures the preservation and allows for broad accessibility to these holdings regardless of a user's location.

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORDS

1. Political Parties

- Party conventions
- Party executive committee and national/regional party headquarters
- Working groups, special interest groups, study groups, commissions, organizational platforms, youth groups
- Press and public relations, election campaigns
- Further party bodies, such as arbitration tribunals
- Party sub-divisions at the State, regional and district level
- Former political parties in the Soviet Occupation Zone and in the German Democratic Republic, also democratically renewed or newly founded after the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90

Depending on the conceptual orientation of the archives, the aim is to preserve all organizational holdings at the European, federal and state levels. At the same time, the holdings at the district and municipal level are preserved either comprehensively or in selection.

2. Party Parliamentary Groups

- Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, in particular records of the Party Chairperson as well as, of the Executive Committees and working groups

- Party parliamentary groups in the State Parliaments with emphasis on executive boards and working groups, taking into consideration regional characteristics
- Party parliamentary group in the European Parliament

3. Leading Politicians

Records of politicians are of outstanding significance. Members of Parliament, as well as other high-ranking public officials, are normally put up for election by their political parties, and are, generally, also prominently active there. Much of what is discussed by politicians at the legislative and executive level in and out the parliament(s) has its origin in party activities and initiatives. For biographical research, personal documents of politicians are indispensable as a historic source since they shed light on the activities, motives and personal settings of these persons. They are essential as a substitute for records that no longer exist (For example: Documents of the SPD, 'Zentrum Party', BVP, DDP, and the trade unions destroyed in 1933, in part by party officials themselves. Or, early records documenting the beginnings of the CDU and CSU, which were disposed of when they were considered no longer relevant) and as a supplement for records of government authorities and party bodies. These documents complement the records of government authorities, of the parties, of parliament and of the party parliamentary groups at the federal and state level. Primarily these persons are

members of government, the parties, parliament, and the party parliamentary groups at the federal and state level.

- Party chairpersons secretary generals, managing directors, members of the party executive boards, members of the party presidiums
- Founding members and inspirational contributors of political ideas
- Federal Presidents, heads of government, Ministers, State Secretaries, including their advisors and staff members, outstanding parliamentarians with leadership positions in party parliamentary groups and parliament
- Local leaders with influence on federal and state politics
- Elected representatives and officials at the European and international level (Chairperson Secretary Generals, Heads of Parliament, Committee Chairpersons in the European Parliament, EC/EU-Commissioners, and Cabinet Heads), as well as, innovative thinkers on the political process of European unification
- Other influential personalities from related social and political movements
- Members of the executive boards of the political foundations

4. European Parties, Associations, and Committees

- Records of European and international organizations and federations, including their predecessor organizations

5. Predecessor and Other Related Organizations, including Party-Affiliated Bodies

- Collections on aligned political movements
- Predecessor organizations of the respective political party, including parties merged
- Parties and Democracy movements in the former GDR
- Records of organizations in the political environment, such as student, women's, youth and senior citizens' associations, political initiatives, business associations and associations for political education, as well as collections of material on their leading representatives
- Records of ideologically related, but politically independent organizations as well as records of friendly organizations such as trade unions

6. Political Foundations

- Records of the executive bodies and directorates (Board of Directors, General Assembly of Members, Board of Trustees, Office of the Chairperson, as well as, of the Secretary General with deputy
- Documents showing the strategic alignment and orientation of domestic and international work done

7. Media Archives and Other Collections

They comprise the multimedia records from the political work and contain audiovisual collections in both analog and digital form.

Photographs

- Of leading representatives of the parties and their organizations
- Documenting party events, panel sessions, and congresses
- Photo archives of organizations
- Showing historical events and socio-historical and cultural-historical developments
- Deposits and (partial) bequests of photographers

Posters, Pamphlets, Flyers, and Wall Newspapers

- Of Election campaigns at the Federal, State, and local level, as well as, at the European level
- Organized events
- Specific topics and campaigns

Film, Videos, Sound Recordings

- Live recordings of party events, congresses and board meetings
- Election commercials
- Films of the parties and organizations

Objects

- Flags, banners, and placards
- Busts, honorary needles, and medals
- Image and election advertising materials such as badges, ballpoint pens or stickers

- Other museum objects of special historical significance

Press (Clipping) Collections

- Material illustrating the published opinion on political issues and events in Germany, particularly regarding party processes and developments. Furthermore, press-related material on the historic development of the political foundations and their domestic and international activities

8. Library Collections

Beyond archival material in a narrow sense, the archives of the political foundations gather printed matter, newspapers, and so-called "grey literature". These holdings supplement the records of the political parties, their parliamentary groups, related organizations, and of bequests. Often these sources exemplify the results of discussions that can be traced back to the factual material incorporated in the inventories of the archives. Generally, these holdings are not collected by libraries and, if so, this is not done there on a systematic basis.

Publications of all kinds by and about the depositors incl. specialist literature

Grey Literature

- Charters, statues, election programs, policy programs, activity reports
- Brochures

Periodicals

- Party newspapers
- Newspapers of other organizations or initiatives
- Magazines, especially membership magazines
- Newsletters
- Press releases
- Series of publications

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Rosa Luxemburg Foundation



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Archive of Social Democracy (AdsD) –
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